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OLD SALEM

By ELEANOR PUTNAM

EDITED BY

ARLO BATES

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
1889

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For the son too young to remember her,
have been gathered these fragments of his
mother's work, broken by death.

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INTRODUCTION.

I.

IT is with unspeakable tenderness and pain that I attempt to gather up the broken threads of this unfinished web, but I appreciate that personal feeling would be out of place here, and that what I say must be confined to the subject of this volume.

The first paper in the brief collection, "Old Salem Shops," was written for the Contributors' Club of the "Atlantic Monthly," a fact which accounts for its brevity. The editor gave it a place in the body of the magazine, and its reception was sufficiently kind to encourage the writing of other papers in the same vein. It was the writer's intention to publish a series of

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sketches which should afterward be put together under the title which this volume bears, and she had noted down the subjects of several which were destined never to be written.

"A Salem Dame-School" and "Salem Cupboards" followed in the "Atlantic;" "Two Salem Institutions" was written for "The Spinnet," a paper published at a Salem fair; while "My Cousin the Captain" was left a fragment at her death.

There were in her portfolio few notes, it being her custom to depend upon her remarkable memory almost entirely, but she had in conversation spoken of many of the things which it was her wish to include in these sketches of the quaint old town which she loved and where now her grave is made.

The subjects she had set down were: "The Marine Museum," where "it was as if each sea-captain had lounged in and hustled down his contributions in any convenient vacant space," "Derby and Char-

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ter Streets," "Old Burying Grounds," "'New Guinea' and Witch Hill," and "The Witch Records (?);" while besides these she spoke with the most genuine tenderness of a paper she wished to write on "Salem Gentlewomen." There was also some talk of a sketch of "Salem Oddities," to include some notice of "Billy Cook" and other erratic individuals; and she wrote thus much upon "The Bundle Handkerchief:"

"The bundle handkerchief is as essential a figure in Salem history as the witches themselves."

"My Cousin the Captain," upon which she was engaged when she laid down forever her pen, was in a vein in which, from her extreme fondness for all things nautical, she delighted especially. The fascination of the sea was strong upon her, and in some of her magazine stories she has shown how lively was her interest in all that pertains to the life of a mariner. There is in the history of Salem enough of nautical romance to excite the most

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sluggish imagination, and far more one so responsive as was hers. There is an irresistible suggestiveness in the record of the voyages of Salem vessels to cannibal Fejee, to Zanzibar, to Mauritius, to Surinam, to Madagascar, to Russia, and to Calcutta. The fancy is aroused by the simple enumeration of the cargoes the ships brought from far over-seas: "Wine and prunes;" "nutmegs, mace and cinnamon;" "raisins, almonds and sweet wines;" "palm-oil, gum copal and ivory;" "sugar, indigo and spices;" or the drolly incongruous mixture, "gin, cheese and steel," brought by the brig Minerva from Amsterdam. There is, too, an opulence in the amounts paid for tariff — the Sumatra, a ship of but 287 tons burden, on three cargoes from Canton handed over duties of $128,363.13, $138,480.34 and $140,761.96 — which throws a sort of halo of magnificent and fabulous wealth over even this prosaic side of the marine history of the old town. The secret voyages of Captain Jonathan Carnes

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to Sumatra, moreover, with an allusion to which "My Cousin the Captain" so abruptly closes; the messages from Captain Eagleston, who in Southern seas caught several albatrosses, fastened to the neck of each a quill in which was a slip of paper, bearing the words, "Ship Leonidas, of Salem, bound for New Zealand," and by means of a French vessel which recaptured one of the birds off the Cape of Good Hope, hundreds of miles away, sent tidings to his friends at home, who during the six months that had elapsed since his sailing had received no news of him; the robbery of the Mexican by the Spanish pirate Pinda, with the unsuccessful attempt to burn alive the imprisoned crew; the adventures of the Charles Daggett among the treacherous cannibals in Fejee, and in transporting the Pitcairn islanders from "sensual Tahiti" to their former home, — all these and many another wild tale of adventure, peril, and shipwreck might be combined to form a most thrilling chapter. It

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is no wonder that one who loved both Salem and the sea should be moved by such a history.

The sketch of Derby Street was one of the first projected, but there are scarcely any notes for it. In it was to figure the house of Mr. Forrester, where upon the parlor walls were painted scenes from the life of the owner, showing his rise from poverty to grandeur; the place of his birth, a humble cottage in Ireland; with his various places of business, the Salem wharves and the vessels which had brought his merchandise to them. The Old Ladies' Home, too, was to be spoken of, with reminiscences of certain of its inmates whose memories took hold upon the romantic and palmy days of the town. And there was to be a sketch of the strange old shop of a Sol Gibbs like instrument maker, which stood upon a corner of Derby Street, wherein were the relics of many a good ship and many a voyage; where among quaint rubbish from all over the world an-

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cient mariners sat and gossiped garrulously, in endless review of their past and tireless bewailings of the degeneracy of the present; where antique chronometers ticked patiently, awaiting the return of owners whose bones were bleaching on the sands of islands in seas of the under world or "suffering a sea change" in caves beneath some ocean near the poles; where the wizened proprietor and the storm-beaten antiques who consorted with him were irresistibly suggestive of the mummies some adventurous Salem captain, perhaps one of these, had brought from Peru; where time had no value save as its measure served to test the accuracy of venerable timepieces; and where the quadrants, the sextants, and the compasses reposing in shabby cases upon the dusty shelves would not have been out of place on the deck of the Flying Dutchman or the Dead Ship of Harpswell. "If fine old Leisure is dead," runs one of the scanty notes, "surely he spent his last days in Salem;" and in this

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quaint nook good old Leisure may well have dreamed through his placid dotage. In the sketch of Derby Street, too, it is to be supposed there would have been mention of the famous Custom House in which Hawthorne wrote, and where he feigned to have found the manuscript of that greatest of all American books, "The Scarlet Letter;" while it was no less intended to picture the dusky sail-lofts, fragrant with the smell of new canvas and of tar, where were stitched on the smooth floor the great white sheets that were to be the wings of many a craft more stout than even the strong-penned albatross, and were to be mirrored in the waves of harbors as far asunder as the world is wide. The writer of these sketches spoke more than once of the suggestive charm of these sail-lofts, where men sat upon the floor like Turks, sewing, with their thimbles curiously fastened in the middle of their palms, and where the children went for bunches of "thrums," to be used at home for tying up

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bundles. Lifted above the stir of Derby Street, the silence of the loft must have been doubly impressive, and have accorded well with the softened light which fell through small dusty panes, to be reflected from the polished floor and great snowy sails.

But most of all would this paper have been likely to deal with the indefinable charm of the days when Derby Street was alive with bustle and excitement; when swarthy sailors were grouped at the corners, or sat smoking before the doors of their boarding-houses, their ears adorned with gold rings, and their hands and wrists profusely illustrated with uncouth designs in India ink; when every shop window was a museum of odd trifles from the Orient, and the very air was thick with a sense of excitement and of mystery.

Of what would have been included in the other papers one may conjecture, but beyond the fact that "The Bundle Handkerchief" was to show the staid people of

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Salem carrying home in that useful article their weekly baked beans and brown bread, and equally their mental food in the shape of books from the Athenæum, or, indeed, for that matter, anything that they ever had to carry home at all; and that it was to give a half-humorous and half-pathetic history of an old gentleman not unlike him who figures in "The Last Leaf," there is nothing that can be said authoritatively.

II.

She who wrote under the name of Eleanor Putnam — a name which was in truth borne by her great-grandmother in maidenhood — went to live in Salem in 1865, being then nine years old. Her ancestors had dwelt there almost from the foundation of the town, and like all genuine Salem families cherished that feeling of local pride and attachment which left so strong a mark upon her character. Half a dozen years she lived here before the family moved temporarily to the West, in

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search of health for the mother. In that time she attended the dame-school she has described, spent her pennies at the quaint shops she has pictured, and stored in a memory which was wonderful for its fidelity and its exactness a thousand details of which we now shall have no record.

She was naturally not a little amused when a Boston journal commented upon her second "Atlantic" paper: "Eleanor Putnam describes a Salem dame-school of fifty or sixty years ago in a charming essay." The truth is, however, that Salem forms a sort of eddy, deliciously shady and quiet, beside the rushing stream of modern progress, and the state of things existing there a score of years ago was similar to that which passed away half a century since in more progressive communities.

III.

I cannot deny myself the pleasure of quoting here from two letters, both written by persons unaware of the identity of

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Eleanor Putnam, and both total strangers to her. The first is of interest as showing the kindly and generous appreciation of a man of letters, who has himself, unhappily for literature, passed beyond all earthly work; the second as proving how truthful are the pictures these essays present.

335 East 17th Street,
Stuyvesant Square.

Dear Miss Putnam:

Pray allow me the pleasure of expressing to you my great admiration and enjoyment of your "Old Salem Shops" in the "Atlantic" for September, which I spoke of often to friends at the time of its appearance. I am led to revert to it now by having recently read Miss Mitford's "Our Village" and "Belford Regis." These I heard spoken of in my boyhood, when they were in great favor; but I never saw them until lately among a heap of books with which I beguiled hours of illness. I was reminded at once of your sketch, — say, rather, highly finished genre-picture, — and could not but think of its superiority, — superiority in everything, in style, in vivid portraiture, in gentle humor.

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And then I thought that I would venture to suggest to you that you should write and publish a group of such pictures of the now — alas! — fading New England life. They could not but be welcome; and they would have at least one admiring and grateful reader.

Sincerely yours,

RICH. GRANT WHITE.

Sunday, 2d Oct. '84.

Of the second letter I have let the personalities remain, because they concern only the dead and can do no harm.

BOSTON, Feb. 20, 1886.

TO THE LADY WHO SIGNS HERSELF ELEANOR PUTNAM.

I have often thought of asking your proper address that I might thank you for the charming tales about dear old Salem; but the February number of the "Atlantic" "Salem Cupboards" is too much for me, and I cannot delay thanking you, and saying what delight I have taken in it. I trust you will pardon the liberty I take in addressing you, though I am a stranger, for it renews my youth, makes

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my blood thrill, and my heart beat when I recall my early home and see it so faithfully described.

The Hersey Derbys were my first cousins. The old house contained stores of cut glass, such as you describe, which was preferred to silver in those days. Aunt Hersey had much humor and was a mimic. I remember her coming into our house on Court Street one day and describing a call at old Mrs. B.'s shop. Mary and Nancy were in the store. How perfectly I remember them! Severe, staid and formal; talking slowly and whining over their private affairs even before customers. Mary would say: "Mother, Miss So-and-so is coming to dinner; what shall we have for her?" After due deliberation, the old lady would squeak out: "Coffee and nimble-cake is a very pretty dinner, Mary." And so it was settled.

The old cupboard is all so natural. At my father's we had stores of the ginger in blue and wickerwork, and on the upper shelf a sticky fork might often be seen. I remember mamma, to shame me, once put the jar and fork on my pillow, but I, in triumph, transferred it to my closet and feasted on it at will.

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I remember well the rock candy in such great quantities; and mamma had a huge box of maccaroni and vermicelli from Leghorn in every variety of form, and as they said: —

> "A box of such enormous size
> Great Holyoke's years would not suffice
> To eat it all before she dies."

I have now some dainty relics, a needle-book with drawings in India ink, — bee-hive, etc., most delicately done, — and tender mottoes.

In Mr. Hoppin's "Auton House" I see again our nursery: the back of the fire-place in iron with a pot of tulips cast on it and the sides always kept so nice with redding; and the smell of the herbs in the closet and the row of bottles that we would uncork and sniff till we came to paregoric, that would ease our pain.

I have rambled on, but I have enjoyed it all so much; the "Gibraltars and Black-Jacks," all that you have given us, and long for more.

Excuse my venturing to address you. I have been unable to walk for sixteen years, am seventy-nine years old, and old age may be pardoned for being garrulous. . . . I am the last of my line, not even a cousin left.

I am your friend,

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IV.

There is perhaps no excuse for adding here the following fragments, since they have no connection with the subject of this little volume. They seem to me worth preserving, however, and while I have denied myself the pleasure of writing a sketch of my wife's life, lest it might seem an effort forcibly to claim attention which she unhappily had not lived long enough to win, it does not appear so wholly out of place to insert these few extracts, which may help such readers as care to do so the better to form a correct estimate of her powers. The habit, already alluded to, of depending upon memory, has reduced her note-books to the most melancholy brevity. From what there is I have made a few selections which seem to me to show her delicate humor, close observation, and felicitous diction.

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"Most of us would read our own caricatures with bland unconsciousness and be immensely amused thereat."

"Apples all gnarled and twisted, as if their faces were drawn awry and puckered and pursed up by their own sourness."

"One may say hard words of her, but not to her."

"I have often noticed in deserted ship-yards the flights of stairs which once led up to the vessel's deck, but which now, the vessel having slipped the ways and sailed to foreign shores, lead to nowhere and stop abruptly in mid-air, as if — like the ladder in the vision of Jacob of old — some one had started to build steps to heaven, but had failed and stopped, discouraged long ere he attained his end."

"He had the face of a young Greek god; as for his soul, — well, perhaps we can say no worse of him than that he had also the soul of a young Greek god."

"She said she did it for the best, but things which are 'done for the best' are seldom pleasant."

"On Kneeland Street about noon of a burn-

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ing July day, an Italian wine-seller sat at the door of his little shop. The old swing door behind him was of a cotton which had been originally of a vivid orange, but which from standing half-open, and thus meeting irregularly the rays of the sun, was now exquisitely shaded from a dull cream tint on the hinge side to the original brilliant hue on the edge where was placed the latch. This door, made more gorgeous than common by the blaze of the sun's rays which fell upon it, served as a screen which set off to perfection the dark face of the Italian, his shock of black hair, his sleepy dark eyes, his crisp bushy beard, the gold rings in his ears, and his handsome, full throat, from which the shirt was carelessly rolled away. He was doing nothing, and doing it with a thoroughness only possible to an Italian or an African."

"That man is not wise who tries to induce one woman to be kind to another on the ground that she is young."

"It was, I believe, what physicians call 'suspended animation,' only that in his case the suspension was chronic."

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"It stopped raining very suddenly, diminishing from a shower of heavy drops to a thin mist of silver; then the pearl gray tint of the sky all at once broke, and began to sweep away toward the northeast in long trailing lines of opal and amber vapor, leaving behind a heaven blue and cool with a pale radiance as of early spring-time."

"He kept a secret as closely as a new cone holds its seeds, which are never delivered an instant before the appointed time."

"She had bent to kiss the baby, who was babbling upon the floor, and as she recovered her standing position a strange thing happened. She extended her hand in recovering her balance, and somehow gave it a twist which at once transformed it from its white plumpness into the hand of an old woman, smooth like parchment and crackled finely like old china. It passed like a flash of lightning. Had it not been that both hands wore the same ring, — a ruby set about with diamonds, — I should have thought that the two hands belonged to different persons. It was the hand of an old woman, but a woman in the prime of life stood

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before me, golden-haired, pink-cheeked, bright-eyed, and vigorous, smoothing the folds of her satin gown and laughing like a girl of twenty."

"When rats desert a sinking ship where do they go?"

"Story of the Old Ladies' Home in Derby Street. A crazy old woman, once a beauty living in the same house, finds love-letters hidden behind a panel in the wall."

V.

Nothing that any one else can write will replace the Salem papers which now we have lost forever, and, however reluctantly, it is necessary to bring to a close this brief review of what it was planned to make this volume. It must remain a promise of which death prevented the fulfillment; a proof, merely, of what might have been.

A. B.

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OLD SALEM SHOPS.

WONDER how many people have memories as vivid as mine of the quaint shops which a score of years ago stood placidly along the quiet streets of Salem. In the Salem of to-day there are few innovations. Not many modern buildings have replaced the time-honored landmarks ; yet twenty years ago Salem, in certain aspects, was far more like an old colonial town than it is now. When the proprietor of an old shop died it was seldom that a new master entered. Nobody new ever came to Salem, and everybody then living there had already his legitimate occupation. The old shops, lacking tenants, went to sleep. Their green shutters were closed, and they were laid up in ordinary without comment from any one.

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I remember one shop of the variety known in Salem as "button stores." It was kept by two quaint old sisters, whose family name I never knew. We always called them Miss Martha and Miss Sibyl. Miss Martha was the older, and sported a magnificent turban, of wonderful construction. Miss Sibyl wore caps and little wintry curls. Both had short-waisted gowns, much shirred toward the belts, and odd little housewives of green leather, which hung from their apron-bindings by green ribbons.

Their wares were few and faded. They had a sparse collection of crewels, old-fashioned laces, little crimped cakes of white wax, and emery balls in futile imitation of strawberries. They sold handkerchiefs, antiquated gauze, and brocaded ribbons, and did embroidery stamping for ladies with much care and deliberation. I remember being once sent to take to these ladies an article which was to be stamped with a single letter. Miss Martha con-

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sulted at some length with her sister, and then, with an air of gentle importance, said to me, "Tell your mother, dear, that sister Sibyl will have it ready in one week, certainly."

On another occasion Miss Sibyl had chanced to give me a penny too much in change; discovering which before I was well away, I returned to the shop and told her of the mistake. Miss Sibyl dropped the penny into the little till, — so slender were the means of these old gentlewomen that I believe even a penny was of importance to them, — and in her gentle voice, she asked, "What is your name, dear?" and when I told her she replied, approvingly, "Well, you are an honest child, and you may go home and tell your mother that Miss Sibyl said so." To this commendation she added the gift of a bit of pink gauze ribbon, brocaded with little yellow and lavender leaves, and I returned to my family in a condition of such conscious virtue that I am convinced that I

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must have been quite insufferable for some days following.

The only article in which these ladies dealt which specially concerned us children was a sort of gay-colored beads, such as were used in making bags and reticules — that fine old bead embroidery which some people show nowadays as the work of their great-grandmothers. These beads were highly valued by Salem children, and were sold for a penny a thimbleful. They were measured out in a small mustard-spoon of yellow wood, and it took three ladlefuls to fill the thimble. I cannot forget the air of placid and judicial gravity with which dear Miss Martha measured out a cent's worth of beads.

One winter day Miss Sibyl died. The green shutters of the shop were bowed with black ribbons, and a bit of rusty black crape fluttered from the knob of the half-glass door, inside of which the curtains were drawn as for a Sunday. For a whole week the shop was decorously closed.

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When it was reopened, only Miss Martha, a little older and grayer and more gently serious, stood behind the scantily filled show-case. My mother went in with me that day and bought some laces. Miss Martha folded each piece about a card and secured the ends with pins, after her usual careful fashion, and made out the quaint little receipted bill with which she always insisted on furnishing customers. As she handed the parcel across the counter she answered a look in my mother's eyes.

"I did not think she would go first," she said, simply. "Sibyl was very young to die."

In the following autumn came Miss Martha's turn to go. Then the shutters were closed forever. Nobody took the store. The winter snows drifted unchecked into the narrow doorway, and the bit of black crape, affixed to the latch by friendly hands, waved forlornly in the chilly winds and shivered in the air, — a thing to affect a child weirdly, and to be

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hastened past with a "creepy" sensation in the uncertain grayness of a winter twilight.

Another well-remembered Salem shop was the little establishment of a certain Mrs. Birmingham. This store was really a more joyous and favorite resort for children than the aristocratic precincts of Miss Martha and Miss Sibyl. One reason for this was that, while two gentler souls never lived, these ladies belonged to a generation when children were kept in their places, and were to be seen and not heard. This fact flavored their kindly treatment of young people, and we felt it. Then, too, save for the beads, their wares were not attractive to little folk; and, lastly, there was a constraint in the prim neatness, the mystic, half-perceived odor of some old Indian perfume, and the general air of decayed gentility that hung about the shop of the two old gentlewomen, which pertained not at all to the thoroughly vulgar but alluring domain of Mrs. Birmingham.

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This shop was not on Essex Street, the street of shops, but upon a quiet by-way, devoted to respectable dwelling-houses, and for this reason we were free to visit Mrs. Birmingham's whenever we chose. It was a tiny house, and I believe it had beside it a very shabby and seedy garden. There were two windows with green wooden shutters, and a green door with the upper half of glass. This was once the fashionable manner of stores in Salem. Inside the door was a step, down which one always fell incontinently; for even if one remembered its existence, it was so narrow and the door closed on its spring so suddenly behind one that there was no choice but to fall. The very name of Birmingham brings up the curious odor of that shop. There was, above all, a close and musty and attic-like perfume. Mingling with this were a perception of cellar mould, a hint of cheese, a dash of tobacco and cabbage, a scent of camphor, a suspicion of snuff, and a strong undercurrent

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of warm black gown scorched by being too near an air-tight stove.

Mrs. Birmingham's stock equaled Buttercup's in variety. Along the floor in front of the left-hand counter was always a row of lusty green cabbages and a basket of apples. A small glass show-case held bread and buns and brick-shaped sheets of livid gingerbread. If one came to buy milk, Mrs. Birmingham dipped it from a never empty pan on the right-hand counter, wherein sundry hapless flies went, like Ophelia, to a moist death. Then there were ribbons, and cotton laces; needles, pins, perfumed soaps, and pomatums. There were a few jars of red-and-white peppermint and cinnamon sticks, a box of pink corncake, — which Mrs. Birmingham conscientiously refused to sell to children, for fear the coloring matter might be poisonous, — and, in season and out, on a line above the right-hand counter hung a row of those dismal creations, the valentines known as "comic." All these articles,

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though shabby and shop-worn enough, probably, possessed for us children a species of fascination. There was a glamour in the very smell before referred to, and the height of our worldly ambition was to have a shop "just like Mrs. Birmingham's."

The things for which we sought Mrs. Birmingham's were, however, chiefly of two sorts. The first was a kind of small jointed wooden doll, about three inches high. In the face these generally looked like Mrs. Birmingham, and they had little red boots painted on their stubby feet. These ugly little puppets cost a cent apiece, and were much prized as servant dolls, nurses particularly, because their arms would crook, and they could be made to hold baby dolls in a rigid but highly satisfactory manner. This flexibility of limb had also, by the by, its unpleasant side; for my brother Tom had a vicious habit, if ever the baby-house were left unguarded, of bending the doll's joints, and leaving

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the poor little manikins in all manner of ungainly and indecorous attitudes. Another thing which could be bought for one cent — the limit of our purses when we went shopping, and it required six or seven of us to spend this sum — was a string of curious little beads made of red sealing-wax. They were somehow moulded on the string while warm, and could not be slipped off. We really did not like them very well, yet we were always buying them, and despite our experience trying to slip them from the string.

There was a bell fastened to the top of Mrs. Birmingham's shop door, which jangled as one precipitately entered, and summoned Mrs. Birmingham from an inner room. Mrs. Birmingham was a stout Irishwoman, with black eyes, fat hands, and a remarkably fiery nose. She wore a rusty black gown — the same, probably, which was always scorching before the stove in the back room — and a false front dark as the raven's wing. I believe she

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must have worn some sort of cap, because, without recalling just where she had them, I never think of her without a distinct impression of dark purple ribbons. She was by no means an amiable woman, and in serving us she had a way of casting our pennies contemptuously into the till which was humiliating in the extreme. She had likewise a habit of never believing that we had a commission right, and persisted in sending us home to make sure that we were sent for a ten and not a five cent loaf, or for one and not two dozen of eggs. This was painful and crushing to our pride, but the bravest never rebelled against Mrs. Birmingham. My brother used, indeed, to lurk around the corner a few minutes, and then return to the shop without having gone home; but I always feared Mrs. Birmingham's sharp black eyes, and felt that a *dies iræ* would certainly come for Tom, when all would be discovered.

In addition to the shop Mrs. Birming-

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ham conducted an intelligence office in the back room. I never saw one of the girls, nor knew of any person's going to Mrs. Birmingham to seek intelligence; but sometimes we heard laughter, and very often Mrs. Birmingham's deep bass voice exclaimed, "Mike, be off wid yer jokin' now! Let alone tellin' stories til the gurrels!"

"Mike" was Mr. Birmingham, a one-legged man, whom I never saw. We knew that he was one-legged because Tom had seen him, and we secretly believed this to be the reason of Mrs. Birmingham's dressing in mourning. We children had asked and been told the nature and purpose of an intelligence office, and yet there was ever a sort of uncanny mystery about that back room, where unseen girls laughed, and Mr. Birmingham was always being told to "be off wid his jokin'."

But *tempora mutantur.* Alas for Mike! He is off with all joking now for good. Alas, too, for Mrs. Birmingham! I cannot

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believe that she died, she was so invincible; but she is gone. The rusty black gown, the purple ribbons, and the ruddy nose have passed somewhere into the shadows of oblivion.

One more shop there was in which, at a certain season, the souls of the children rejoiced. It was not much of a shop at ordinary times; indeed, it was but a small and unnoticeable building just around a corner of Essex Street. It was only at holiday time that it blossomed out of insignificance. This was before the days of any extent of holiday decoration, and very little in the way of Christmas trimming was done by Salem tradesmen. The season was celebrated with decorous merriment in our homes, but almost no church adornment was seen, and most of the shops relaxed not from their customary Salem air of eminent and grave respectability. No butcher sent home a spray of holly with the goose, and no Christmas cards dropped, as now, from the packages of baker or can-

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dlestick maker. It was therefore the more delightful to witness the annual transformation of the little shop around the Essex Street corner. The very heart and soul of Christmastide must have dwelt in the plump body of the man who kept that shop. His wooden awning was converted into a perfect arbor, under which the front of his little store showed as an enchanted cavern of untold beauty; a bower of lusty greenery, aglow at night with the starry brilliance of many candles, gay with the scarlet berries of holly, set off by the mystic mistletoe, and rich with Aladdin treasures of sugary birds and beasts, ropes of snowy popped corn, bewildering braids, twists and baskets of pink-and-white sugar, golden oranges, — a rarer fruit then than now, — white grapes in luscious clusters, and bunches of those lovely cherries of clear red barley candy with yellow broom corn for stems.

After all, though, it was not so much that the wares were more delightful than

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those kept by other folk. Probably the very same things could have been bought at any fruit store. It was simply that this tiny shop and its plump, red-cheeked owner were overflowing with the subtle and joyous spirit of keeping holiday. We children used always to call his place "the Christmas shop;" and I well remember the thrill of joy which ran over me when, returning from school one afternoon, I saw my own parents entering the jovial precincts. I sped home on wingèd feet to tell the other children that "mother and father were in the Christmas shop;" and we all sat about the fire in the twilight and "guessed" what they were buying, and reveled in the dear delights which were to result from a visit to that treasure house.

Where is he now, that child-like man who loved the holidays? The merry wight was twenty years before his time, but it warms one's heart to think of him to-day. Alas, a visit to Salem last year showed his wooden awning torn away, and in his dis-

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mantled bower a dry and wizened stationer among law books and school-room furnishings. What a direful change from the halcyon days of old! I wonder that the chubby ghost of the former owner does not walk o' nights to bemoan the times that are no more.

The shop of Miss Martha and Miss Sibyl, too, seemed to be entirely done away with, and Mrs. Birmingham's, although still standing, was but a wreck. I would gladly have bought there, for old times' sake, a jointed doll or a string of sealing-wax beads; but the green wooden shutters were closed, the green door sunken sadly on its hinges, its glass half grossly boarded. The grass grew high before the doorstone. The mossy roof was concave. The chimney was almost tottering. The little shop was drawing itself together and dying; asking no sympathy of the beholder, but meeting its appointed fate with that gray and silent resignation which alone is considered the proper thing in Salem society.

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A SALEM DAME-SCHOOL.

AN English journal recently devoted some space to a discussion of the so-called "dame-school" of the rustic district, and concluded that its virtue, if indeed it possessed any, was of the smallest. It appears from this article that, while the authorities urge the superior benefit and training to be found in the parish schools, the villagers, with the doggedness of true lower-class ignorance, persist in sending their children to the old dame, — the same, perchance, who taught them their own letters thirty or forty years before, and who depends upon the pittance earned by her labors to keep herself alive and out of the parish workhouse.

Certainly all this is most ungrateful and vicious of the peasantry, and if they were a little more intelligent they would see that

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they have really no right to cut off the educational advantages of their children, just for the sake of a snuffy old woman, who makes her pupils sing the multiplication table through their noses, and who calls *z* "izzard." It is, however, a singular fact that this conservative clinging to old methods is not confined to English ploughmen, for it was not long ago that a well-known American divine spoke very warmly, at a meeting of the Round Table Club, in favor of the old methods of teaching. A lady of high breeding and of rather unusual culture added her opinion, saying, —

"I want my boy to learn his letters exactly as I did, from a primer laid upon his teacher's knee; and I want the letters to be pointed out with a great brass pin, as mine were, and no other way."

Such of us as have ever been to one of these dame-schools must, I think, always hold them in kindly and loving remembrance, and particularly is this true in re-

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gard to the dame-schools of Salem. In this ancient city these schools differed from their English counterparts in being kept by gentlewomen for the benefit of well-born children. The lower classes attended the public schools. In those days it would have been unutterably vulgar to allow one's children to go to any but a private school until they were old enough to enter the higher grades.

Perhaps the most exclusive of all these private schools was one kept by a pair of gentlewomen living in the upper and eminently respectable portion of Essex Street. Their name was not Witherspoon, but for purposes of disguise it may be well to call it thus. The Misses Witherspoon's school was not opened to whomsoever might chance to knock. Only an introduction by some person with untarnished 'scutcheon, who could vouch for one's possession of an undoubted great-grandfather, could gain admission to this small but aristocratic symposium. I have reason to

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believe that I was not accepted without a thorough examination of family documents, and that the scale was finally turned in my favor by the production of an ancestress who was down in the witch records as having testified against some poor old goody or other, and signed "Phœbe Chandler, her + mark." Once a pupil at the Misses Witherspoon's school, however, one's social superiority was firmly established forever. In after years one might elope with a grocer, become a spiritualistic medium, or start a woman's bank, but one could never be regarded as quite beyond the pale who could claim ever to have been admitted to the select circle at the Misses Witherspoon's.

Our way to school lay along the quieter part of Essex Street. We always stopped to sharpen our slate-pencils by rubbing them upon the granite bases of the great columns before Mechanic's Hall, and there was one little drug shop before which we always loitered to admire the crimson and

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purple jars which adorned the windows. The quaint little house where the witches were tried was attached by one corner to this shop. It was a quiet and commonplace building, occupied at that time by a maker and mender of sun-umbrellas. It stood back in a green yard, and from an upper window projected, for a sign, a tricolored parasol. There was nothing at all uncanny about the silent, weather-beaten old house, yet we eyed it askance, and once felt a thrill of genuine horror at the gaunt apparition of a black cat stealing with soft feet over the gray roof.

The Misses Witherspoon's house faced Essex Street, but not to ruin the front stair carpet we always went in by a door which opened into the little side-yard. This brought us into the kitchen, from which the back stairs ascended. In order that we might not look profanely upon the domestic priestess of the household, a long curtain of gay-colored patch was hung beside the stairway, and we were further-

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more charged not to look over the top of it when we reached a height upon the stairs which made this possible. As a natural result, the space behind the curtain became a sort of Bluebeard's Chamber, and one inevitably did peep now and then, though one never saw anything more wonderful than Miss Abby Witherspoon wiping tea-cups.

The stairs led directly into a little back chamber, in which we hung our outside garments, and from this chamber we entered the school-room. This was a low, square apartment in the left-hand front corner of the house, having two windows on Essex Street, and I think only one which looked upon the side-yard. The walls had a wooden dado painted white, while the paper, in brown and blue, repeated a meaningless pattern. There were two rows of single desks, with hard, slippery little yellow chairs. These were for the girls. There was one row of seats for boys, — the female sex was the dom-

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inant one at the Misses Witherspoon's,— and that was decorously removed to the furthest possible limit. The Misses Witherspoon had no great liking for boys. They regarded them always with suspicion, as one might a Norwich torpedo, and I do not believe that they ever came wholly to consider it proper to allow them to attend the school at all.

There were three Misses Witherspoon. The oldest, Miss Emily, was rather severe in outward appearance, with an upright figure and remarkably keen dark eyes. One fancied that she might have been handsome as a young woman, but something too sharp and clever with her tongue. She taught arithmetic, and put down on a little slate marks for our misdemeanors. I can hear now the brisk tap of her pencil, and the measured and awful "Little girls, my sharp eye is on you!" Sometimes this remark was personal instead of general, and dire indeed was the shame which overwhelmed that one of us whom she

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named. Miss Lucy, the second sister, was not made of such stuff as Miss Emily. She was milder of face and gentler of voice, and had a kindly, caressing way with those pupils whose youth forced them to spell out their lessons from a book upon her knee. The third sister, Miss Abby, was the housekeeper, and never appeared in the school-room. All the sisters wore scant-skirted gowns, and their hair was scalloped low over their ears and turned up oddly behind to a tight fastening of shell combs.

At recess we did not go to romp rudely out-of-doors, but amused ourselves in the house with A Ship from Canton and The Genteel Lady, as became well-bred children. An exception was made in favor of the boys, who were told to go out into the yard to shout. Miss Emily seemed to think that boys must go somewhere occasionally to shout, as a whale must come up to blow. The boys never did shout. I fancy they were too much depressed by

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the great gentility of everything. There were but two of them, and they generally sat on a deserted hen-coop and banged their heels and looked very dismal till the little bell tinkled for them to come in. When there had been a fall of moist snow, the boys would sometimes snowball each other in a perfunctory way, being bidden to the sport by Miss Lucy; and on such occasions we of the gentler sex were allowed to go and look upon the stirring sight from the back-chamber window.

The elder of these two boys was a tall, very pale, light-haired lad, who was called by Miss Emily "Danyell." He had a highly satisfactory disease of the eyes, which often prevented him from studying for an entire day, but which was fortunately not aggravated by drawing pictures on the slate and making Jacob's ladders. On a Wednesday, when the girls all sewed, Danyell did a deed without a name by means of four pins stuck into a spool and some bits of colored worsted. We heard

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that he was making a lamp-mat for his aunt, but I fear it was never finished, for the other boy, one direful day, called Danyell "a sissy knitting a night-cap for his granny," and, although he was obliged to stand for some time in a corner as a punishment, I think the iron of his sneering words entered the soul of Danyell; at all events, the spool disappeared.

This same "other boy," whose name has entirely faded from my memory, was decidedly more masculine in character than Danyell. He was a short, fat lad, and he wore a bottle-green jacket, which was covered with brass buttons, and fitted as tightly as Tommy Traddles' own. His hair was remarkably thick, and he was a very sullen boy, with a revengeful disposition. It was his standing grievance that he went to a private school. He one day confided to me that his cousin, who went to the Broad Street school, had been thrown down in a foot-ball rush, and had had three teeth knocked in. He added

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that a fellow could have some fun at a public school, but that Miss Witherspoon's was a baby-class. I did not like this slur on our dear little school, and I totally disagreed with the sullen boy as to what was fun. A short time after this Danyell was withdrawn from the Misses Witherspoon's to go to an academy somewhere, and the green-jacketed boy was left to sit in a row by himself, to go out to shout alone at recess, and to sit gloomily by himself on the hen-coop and swing his heels.

A certain air of gentle good-breeding prevailed at the Misses Witherspoon's school, which affected the children so far that quarrels and sharp words seem to have been practically unknown. This may have been owing partly to the fact that we were always under the eyes of our teachers, even at recess; but it is quite true that we were little gentlewomen in school, whatever we may have been out of it. There are, for example, few schools to-day where a child made conspicuous by her

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dress could escape unkindly jests and untimely displays of wit from her mates. It chanced to be my lot at this time to be arrayed in the cast-off raiment of a pair of venerable great-aunts, whose taste in fabrics was, to say sooth, a little antiquated. Accordingly, while other children wore warm-colored plaids and soft cashmeres of lovely hues, I was clad in gowns of dull browns and smutty purples, or, still worse, in flowered chintzes, which even in those days looked hopelessly old-fashioned, and resembled upholstery stuffs. My rubbers, too, instead of being of the shiny, blue-lined sort so dear to childish souls, were literally what Miss Lucy called "gum-shoes," being made of pure rubber spread while hot over a last. They had an impression of a clover leaf stamped on each toe. After a little wear ugly pits began to appear in the rubber, as if the shoes had had small-pox. One side was thicker than the other, and when taken off they closed in a hateful way, and persisted in lying

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upon the side. I used to think I could have borne the other peculiarities with resignation, but there was something particularly aggravating in having one's rubbers shut up when taken from the feet. Other children had neat little twine school-satchels, but I used the old green baize bag in which my grandfather had carried his law papers. It was so long and I so short that it nearly touched the ground as I walked, and my book and my apple rolled about unpleasantly in the bottom. In these days, what rude sport would not be directed by school-girls against a child with such odd belongings! But so perfect was the kindly good-breeding of the little dame-school that I never remember a smile or significant glance, though I must have been indeed an odd and antiquated figure.

Beside these invaluable teachings of kindness and courtesy the lessons were few and simple. We read and spelled and wrote copies on our slates. We chanted the multiplication table to an "adapted"

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Yankee Doodle. We learned addition and subtraction by an abacus, which was an article like a wire broiler strung with colored wooden beads, and which had the effect of at once destroying any possibility of original effort on the part of the pupil. When we were marked for any misdemeanor we had to go to Miss Emily and ask what we should do to "make up our marks." Before doing this it was the fashion to cry — or pretend to cry — for a few moments, with one's head resting upon the desk. I do not think any of us ever really shed a tear, but it was a perfunctory way we had of showing our sense of the disgrace of having a mark. The "making up a mark" was by no means a heavy penance. It usually consisted of writing one's name ten times, or making some figures, or "doing sums" on a slate.

We recited in arithmetic to Miss Emily, but as we had all sorts of odd books each child was in a class by herself. Most of the pupils had arithmetics of the compara-

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tively modern sort, wherein were rows of pinks and apples, and little sparrows obligingly sitting on fences in the twos and threes necessary for teaching the first two of the four simple rules. My own book, however, was of a far earlier time, rummaged out of the attic for my special use. It was a thin, brown volume, with an honest enough outside, but the contents were of a peculiarly misleading and beguiling character. It opened with an apparently artless tale of an old woman whose name was Jane, who lived "all alone by herself in a small hut upon the lea." She was further described as being very poor, — so poor that she depended for her living upon selling the few little things raised in her tiny garden patch and the eggs laid by her three speckled hens. The wind blew about her humble cot, and in winter time often drove the snow through the cracks in the old walls. Jane was, however, a good and thrifty old woman, and did her best to make an honest living. Each of her spec-

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kled hens laid her a nice white egg every day: now how many days would it take for old Jane to save a dozen eggs to carry to market? All the problems in the book were of this same deceitful sort, and the way in which the youthful attention was ensnared by the semblance to a tale, and then suddenly brought up by a point-blank demand of "how much" or "how many," was calculated to kill forever one's faith in human nature.

In addition to our book lessons, we were taught various quaint little accomplishments, such as courtesying prettily and the like, and every Wednesday Miss Lucy instructed us in needlework. A brother of the ladies had been a captain in the East India merchant service. We children were dimly aware of a never quite dissipated odor of sandal-wood and camphor about the old house, — there was always a waft of it when the front entry door was opened, — and we believed that the guest chamber contained much treasure in the way of fans,

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silks, and embroidered crape shawls. We never saw anything, however, except on some afternoons, when we were judged to be especially deserving, and were rewarded by the sight of a whale's tooth curiously carved, an ivory-tinted ostrich egg, and a lump of golden amber in which a tiny hapless fly was mysteriously imprisoned. These treasures, although not at all uncommon in Salem, the seat of the old East India trade, yet had always a mystic charm for us. I recall now the delightful air of pride with which the sisters would refer to "our brother, Captain Witherspoon," and the tone, slightly tinged with incredulity, with which they described to us the manners and customs of foreign lands. I have seen much amber since that time, but none with the magic charm which surrounded that bit held on dear Miss Lucy's palm, or seriously rubbed upon Miss Lucy's silk apron and made to attract bits of paper scattered on the table.

The one holiday which was held in high

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favor by our teachers was New Year's Day. Miss Lucy told us that her mother used to receive many visitors upon that day, and that the sisters wished always to keep it as long as she lived. At this time it was the custom for two of the pupils to visit the homes of the others, and collect a certain small sum from each as a holiday gift to our teachers. This sum was neatly inclosed in an envelope, and handed to Miss Emily, with a wish for a happy New Year. It was always received with a well-bred air of surprise, though the gift had been collected and presented in exactly the same manner ever since the school was opened.

On the other hand, our teachers had a surprise of like sort for us. After the morning devotions, we were marshaled into an orderly line, and conducted down the back stairs and through the kitchen to the door of the sunny parlor, where old Madam Witherspoon sat. She was a tiny and rigidly dignified old lady, in a scant

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black satin gown and a white lace cap. Before crossing the threshold each one of us was required to draw out her dress-skirts correctly, make a courtesy, and say, —

"I wish you a happy New Year, Madam Witherspoon."

To this she replied by a stately bow. Before her, upon a small table, was ranged a collection of gifts, from which we were allowed to choose. The first year I was in the school there were knives and harmonicums for the boys, and for the girls little cabinets painted red and quite sticky with varnish, and dolls so stiff and antiquated and with such old-fashioned faces that I cannot imagine where they were discovered, unless the old ladies had conjured them out of the memory of some shop of their childhood. There clung to these gifts, though we had prettier ones at home, the same aroma of quaint delight which exhaled from everything about the charming old house. After this ceremony we were

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graciously dismissed, and the rest of the day was our own.

It may, perhaps, be true that there was no great wisdom to be gained at the little dame-school. Our lessons were few and simple, and the methods were undoubtedly old-fashioned. However, what we learned we learned thoroughly, and there were lessons not to be found in books to be gained from the daily example of the two fine old gentlewomen, with their rigid ideas of right and wrong and the quaintly elegant manners of an age gone by.

Many are the children, now grown and scattered, who have sat under their gentle sway, and surely not one of them can think to-day without a thrill of kindly affection of the little dame-school in the gray old house on Essex Street.

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TWO SALEM INSTITUTIONS.

NO history of the charming and venerable town of Salem would be complete which omitted the mention of those two purely Salem institutions, Black-jacks and Gibraltars. They possess all the prestige and dignity of respectable age. They are no modern and frivolous confection, such as cream caramels or chocolates duchesse. Our fathers knew Black-jack. Gibraltars met with the sedate approval of our grandmothers. Black-jacks and Gibraltars are prehistoric.

Since there may chance to be alive some free-born American who does not know these highly proper confections, it is, perhaps, as well to state that a Black-jack is a generous stick of a dark and saccharine compound which combines a variety of flavors. In tasting Black-jack you imagine

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that you detect a hint of maple syrup, a trace of butter, a trifle of brown sugar and molasses, and a tiny fancy of the whole mixture's having been burnt on to the kettle. Make no mistake, however. This burnt flavor is not accidental, but intentional. It is one of the mysteries, not particularly pleasant perhaps, but it is the correct Black-jack flavor, and no Black-jack worthy of the name would consent to be without it. To the youthful palate Black-jack possesses a taste at once sweet and bitter, rich and slightly medicinal, but altogether joyous and delightsome.

The Gibraltar, on the other hand, is a white and delicate candy, flavored with lemon or peppermint, soft as cream at one stage of its existence, but capable of hardening into a consistency so stony and so unutterably flinty-hearted that it is almost a libel upon the rock whose name it bears. The Gibraltar is the aristocrat of Salem confectionery. It gazes upon chocolate and sherbet and says: —

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"Before you were, I was. After you are not, I shall be."

Black jack decidedly has not that air of exclusiveness which marks the Gibraltar. Black-jack has about it a reckless and somewhat riotous devil-may-carishness. It is preëminently the joy of the youthful. It satisfies young ambition. It fills all one's desires as to stickiness and sweetness. It is of convenient size if one be generously disposed to offer bites. It is a consoler of grief, and a sympathizer in time of joy.

The Gibraltar is the daintier sweetmeat. One may eat a dozen — could one be so ill-bred — without soiling one's finger tips. The Gibraltar, although well loved in childhood, grows with our growth, ever increasing in value through the years, to become in time the cherished companion of our age. The taste in flavors is apt to change, lemon being preferred by youth. Indeed, I remember the pathetic saying of a charming old Salem dame: —

"I know I must be growing old, because

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a *peppermint* Gibraltar is so comforting to me!"

It is related of a Salem lady who went abroad for an extended tour that she carried with her a plenteous supply of Gibraltars, and that whenever she found herself feeling lonely, or ill with home-longing, she ate a Gibraltar, and was straightway consoled.

The Gibraltar is the confection of age, to the exclusion of Black-jack. One could not imagine my dear old friend, Miss Mary-Ellen, rioting in the sticky delight of Black-jack, but I think she was never without a neatly wrapped Gibraltar in her work, basket, which from time to time she nibbled with much dignity and serious enjoyment.

In spite of their differences of constitution, however, Black-jack and Gibraltar are firm friends, united by the bonds of age and long companionship. Together they have lived. Together they have rejoiced the souls of generations. Witch Hill may blow away; the East India Museum may

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be swallowed up in earth; Charter Street Burying Ground may go out to sea; but as long as a single house remains standing in Salem Village, so long will Black-jack and Gibraltar wisely reign, and retain their honorable place in the inmost hearts of the Salem people.

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SALEM CUPBOARDS.

THERE were cupboards in Salem. Whether they are there still, or have been built up, or pulled down, or swept away, in the march of modern improvement, I know not, but in my childhood there were cupboards in Salem.

They were, moreover, real cupboards; no after-thoughts, built across the end of an entry here or the corner of a room there, — places into which to huddle umbrellas and overcoats, or to hustle mending and children's litter out of the sight of visitors. Salem cupboards were always intentional. The builder understood his responsibility, and acted accordingly. The housewife regarded her cupboards as the inner and most sacred portion of her trust. It was no light task even to keep the keys always counted and polished. As for los-

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ing one, or forgetting which was which, that would indicate a mind so utterly frivolous that one could hardly conceive of it.

The genuine, old-time Salem housekeeper realized that there was a conscience in her work. She took her cupboards seriously. To her there was nothing trivial about them. To do her duty by her cupboards was one of the most inviolable principles of her sober and decorous life.

It took no ordinary brain to keep watch and ward over these cupboards. They were many in number. They were confusing as to size and shape. They possessed the charm of the unexpected. One never knew quite when or where one should chance upon them. They were tall and narrow beside the fireplace, or low and chubby above it; they lurked behind the wainscoting, like Polonius back of the arras. One of them was to be reached only by a step-ladder; another jolly pair occupied crannies under two deep window-seats. In one house was a cupboard which pretended

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to be solid wall, but was really a deep recess for the concealment of firearms; and in yet another was a narrow closet about which hung the horror of an old Ginevra-like legend of smothering to death.

There was literally no end to the number and variety of Salem cupboards. They possessed a charm quite their own, and this charm was felt to the utmost by the children, who were only occasionally allowed to view the treasures kept under strict lock and key by the high priestesses of these sacred nooks and shrines.

Foremost in the memory of delightful Salem cupboards stands the dining-room closet of a second-cousin of ours, whom we called Cousin Susan. She was a widow of some fifty odd years, and kept house for a bachelor brother, who was a retired sea-captain. She was a round, trim, black-eyed woman, greatly afflicted with rheumatism, for which reason she always walked with a cane. The cane was of some dark, foreign wood, highly polished,

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and the top was carved to resemble a falcon's head, with shining eyes of yellow glass.

Cousin Susan was a kindly soul, who would, I think, have even been merry, had not the austerity of her youthful training warped her natural instincts and given her a certain rigidly virtuous air. She believed very sincerely in the old-time maxim that "children should be seen, and not heard," and she had rather an alarming way at times of saying "Tut, tut!" But she was really fond of young people, and whenever we went to see her she would say seductively, —

"I wonder, now, if we could find anything nice in Cousin Susan's dining-room cupboard."

And truly that person who failed to do so must have been hard to please; for, in our eyes at least, that cupboard held a little of everything that was rare and delightful.

A most delicious odor came forth when

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the door was opened: a hint of the spiciness of rich cake, a tingling sense of preserved ginger, and a certain ineffable sweetness which no other closet ever possessed, and which I know not how to describe. It might well have proceeded from the walls and shelves of the cupboard itself, for they were indeed emblems of purity. The paint was varnished to a high degree of glossiness, and was so exquisitely kept as to look like white porcelain.

The china here, as in all genuine Salem cupboards, was chiefly of the honest old blue Canton ware. There were shining piles of those plates which, while they are rather heavy to handle, always surprise one by being so thin at the edges. There were generous teacups like small bowls, squat pitchers with big noses, and a tureen whose cover had the head of a boar for a handle. And in all this the blue was dull and deep in tint, with a certain ill-defined, vaporous quality at the edges of the lines, and the white of the cool greenish tinge of

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a duck's egg. You can buy blue Canton to-day, but it is not old blue Canton. Such china is matchless now, but in this cupboard there were shelves of it.

Cousin Susan possessed also another set of china, which she valued far above her blue. It was always singularly attractive to us as children, though I have come to believe that it is far less beautiful than the Canton. It was a pure, thin white ware, delicately fluted at the edges and decorated with little raised lilac sprigs. It was used only upon occasions of solemn company tea-drinkings, and Cousin Susan always washed it herself in her little cedar dish-tub. We children considered this china so choice and desirable that a bit of a broken saucer, which included one of the pale, tiny sprays, was cherished far above our real doll's dishes. We lent it from one to another, each of us keeping it for one day; but it was always one of those unsatisfactory treasures of childhood for which we could never find any adequate

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use. We could think of nothing to do with this bit of china which seemed at all worthy of so lovely an object.

At the left hand of Cousin Susan's shelves of china was a little cupboard with a diamond-paned glass door. This was the *sanctum sanctorum*, — a cupboard within a cupboard; and here, as one might have expected, were stored the choicest treasures of all. It was not the domestic preserve closet. Cousin Susan was thrifty, and had good store of home-made dainties, but they were kept in the cool seclusion of a dark cellar store-room. This little glass cupboard held the stock of foreign sweetmeats: the round-shouldered blue jars, inclosed in a network of split bamboo, which contained the fiery, amber ginger; the flat boxes of guava jelly, hot curry powders, chilli sauce, and choleric Bengal chutney. Here were two miniature casks of tamarinds, jolly and black, Cousin Susan's favorites. She had a certain air of disapproval toward most of these strange

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conserves. "They are not good for little people," she averred; and indeed she always maintained that these ardent sweetmeats were fitter for the delectation of rude men than for the delicate palates of gentlewomen. Of tamarinds, however, Cousin Susan did approve. Properly diluted with cool water, they made what she called a "very pretty drink." She was fond of sending a glass to any neighbor who was ill and feverish, and she was always following our cousin the sea-captain about with a blue china bowl of the mixture, begging him to partake of it.

"Susan, I hate tamarind-water," our cousin would protest.

"It will cool your blood, William," his sister would urge.

"But I don't want my blood cool. I want it warm," the captain would reply.

As a general thing, however, Cousin Susan came off triumphant. The captain grumblingly partook of his dose, and was always most generous in sharing it with

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us children. The beautiful little brown stones also fell to our lot, and we hoarded the useless things with great care, although it always seemed to us a great oversight on the part of nature that tamarind seeds did not have holes through them, that one might string them as beads.

Cousin Susan's cupboard also contained stronger waters than tamarind, for side by side sat two corpulent cut-glass decanters, of which one was half filled with madeira wine, and the other with honest rum. A variety of sweet cakes was near by, to be served with the wine to any chance visitor. There were black fruit cake in a japanned box; "hearts and rounds" of rich yellow pound cake; and certain delicate but inane little sponge biscuit, of which our cousin spoke by the older-fashioned name of diet — or, as she chose to pronounce it, "dier" — bread. She always called the sponge cakes "little dier breads." Pound and fruit cakes were forbidden to our youth, but we might have our ladylike fill of "dier breads,"

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and also of delightful seed-cakes, which were cut in the shape of an oak-leaf, and were marvels of sugary thinness.

These seed-cakes, by the bye, were kept in a jar which deserves at least a passing mention. It was, I suppose, some two or three feet high, though it looked to me then much higher. It was of blue-and-white china, and was fitted with a cover of dull silver. Tradition stated that some sea-faring ancestor had brought it home from Calcutta, filled with rock-candy. What was done with so large a supply of this confection I never knew. In those days choice sugar-plums were not as plenty as they have since become; possibly at the time "Black-jacks" and "Gibraltars" were unknown, and this was Salem's only candy. At all events, it is somewhere recorded that the ship Belisarius brought from Calcutta "ten thousand seven hundred and sixty-seven pounds" of this same rocky and crystalline dainty. The fact of such a quantity of candy had for us children a

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superb and opulent significance. What an idea, to have a choice confection, not by the stick or beggarly ounce, but by the jarful! To think of going and casually helping one's self at will! To imagine lifting that silver lid, and gazing unreproved into the sugary depths! Perhaps nice, white-haired spinsters used it in glittering lumps to sweeten their tea, or even served it at table by the plateful, as one might serve cake. Fancy exhausted itself in all sorts of delightful speculations. The whole legend had a profuse and mythical sound. It was like a fairy tale, a scene from Arabian Nights. It threw about the jar and the cupboard a mystic charm which time fails to efface. Even now a stick of sparkling rock-candy has power to call up Cousin Susan's dining-room cupboard, its sweet, curious perfume, the quaint old silver and blue china, and the huge turkey-feather fan, with its carved ivory handle and wreath of brilliant painted flowers, which hung on the inside of the door.

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Out of the shadows of the past comes another memory, the picture of that strange old Salem homestead which has been made known to fame as the House of the Seven Gables. Some alterations have done away with two of the gables, but the old house is otherwise unchanged. In the days of my childhood its mistress was a lonely woman, about whom hung the mystery of one whose solitude is peopled by the weird visions that opium brings. We regarded her with something of awe, and I have wondered, in later days, what strange and eldritch beings walked with her about those shadowy rooms, or flitted noiselessly up and down the fine old staircase.

The House of the Seven Gables was no open and joyous dwelling, where children loved to flock and run about at will. There was always an air of ceremony and dignity here, and a certain oppressive chill haunted the great low parlor, where the beams divided the ceiling into squares. We never paid a visit there except with some grown

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person, and then sat throughout our stay, dangling our legs from our high chairs, and studying the quaintly stiff array of ornaments upon the lofty mantel. There were three covered Delft jars, two vases of flowers, and at either end a flask-shaped china vase. Between these taller articles were set shallow cups of painted china. Except in the flowers which filled the two middle vases, I never knew the arrangement of the mantel to differ.

A large jar stood on the floor directly beneath the mantel, and ranged firmly about the room were several Dutch apple-tree chairs, with others of old-fashioned severity. On the right of the mantel was a delightful cupboard, whose tall, arched door often stood open, displaying a beautiful collection of old cut glass. We children used to describe this cupboard as "hollow," it being, in fact, shaped like an apse. It had six semi-circular shelves, all of rich dark wood, against which the rows of splendid old glass glittered most bravely

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There were graceful pitchers, shallow dishes, odd bowls, and flagons almost without number. On the floor of the cupboard a vast china punch-bowl was flanked by jars and vases each more enchanting than the other. I believe there was no truly housewifely dame in Salem who did not adore and envy this wealth of crystal, but although we children admired it, it did not inspire us with any deeper feelings. It did not appeal to the youthful imagination. It was an array of frail and icy splendor, toward which our hearts could not warm; not even the subtle suggestions of good cheer conveyed by delicate wine-glasses and portly old decanters could charm minds so unformed and simple as ours.

Equally far removed from childish emotions, and even more splendid, was the chest of family silver, which we were sometimes allowed to behold. How little did we think, as we viewed in admiring silence the fine heavy tankards, candlesticks, old two-tined silver forks, and antique porrin-

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gers, that the fate of this haughty collection was to be sold for mere old silver, and hustled without respect or reverence to a fiery death in the silversmith's crucible! Sadly changed since that day is the House of the Seven Gables. The family silver is melted; the antique-furnishings are scattered; and gone, one knows not whither, the beautiful old glass, the glory of that tall, dark, "hollow" cupboard, and the pride of that strange mistress, who dreamed such dreams and saw such eerie visions in her great lonely chamber above-stairs.

Another Salem cupboard, which is always of pleasant memory, was in the house of one of my schoolmates, with whom I was spasmodically intimate. I am sorry to say that our visits to this closet were attended by a certain awful joy, from the fact that they always partook of a character surreptitious, not to say sneaking. I was assured by my companion that her mother approved of her investigations, but, at the same time, she casually mentioned that it

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was as well not to speak in the front entry, and that the fourth stair from the top creaked "so awful" that she usually made a point of stepping over it.

The chamber containing the closet was a back room, seldom visited, and used only for the storage of trunks and boxes. The windows were fitted with shutters, in one of which a heart-shaped hole had been cut to admit a little light. At the chimney end the room was wainscoted to the ceiling with wood which had never been painted, but which had taken a fine brown color from age and the fires which had once roared on the red-tiled hearth. The closet in this brown paneling was one of the tall and narrow sort, and the shelves ran back very deep. It was of the same age-darkened wood within as without, and the door sagged on its hinges, so that we had to lift it together when we opened it; otherwise we might have disturbed some of those people below who were so very willing we should be there. In this cup-

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board were stored the possessions of a great-aunt of my friend. We had seen an ivory picture of her in the parlor many times, and we thought of her always as a thin young creature, with unnaturally large gray eyes, and a neck that looked too slender to bear the weight of the small head with its wealth of piled-up auburn hair. Her name was Isabel, and she had died in her early girlhood. Nobody seemed to remember much about her. Perhaps there was nothing to remember. Her miniature and her framed sampler were preserved with honor, but I think my friend and myself were the only ones who cared for the relics which were put away in this upper cupboard.

There were a number of books of the floral-token order, containing sentimental verses and bits of elegant prose in praise of the Rose, the Lily, the Rainbow, and kindred subjects. They were embellished with the portraits of large-eyed and small-mouthed beauties with wonderful ringlets,

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and the covers, though now faded, had once been gorgeous with gilding and floral designs. An unpleasant feature of these books was the fact that when one opened them tiny brown spiders went "tacking" crookedly across the pages. They were a highly objectionable sort of spiders, that did not at all mind being suddenly jammed between the pages, — for they were already too flat to be any flatter, — and that would just as lief run backward as forward with their ugly crab-like legs.

On the same shelf with the books was the mahogany box of water-colors with which poor Isabel, who had accomplishments, forsooth, had made the prim little sketches which filled a portfolio. They were chiefly of the stencil-plate variety, done from boarding-school "patterns," in clear colors, upon white, gilt-edged drawing-paper. There was one full-blown white rose, painted with exquisite neatness and delicacy, which was an especial favorite of ours; but most of the designs were wreaths

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and garlands of flowers surrounding verses of poetry copied in a fine hand. There was also on this shelf an album, wherein friends had written verses from the poets, and admirers had even ventured upon original tributes "To Isabel."

In a bag of faded brocade was a tangle of pale sampler silks and crewels, not in that deliciously prim state of order which one would have expected of Isabel. Perhaps before our day some other child had tossed them over, even as we did, longing but not daring to appropriate them. Somehow, these silks and wools seemed so much prettier than those of any ordinary, downstairs work-bag; and certainly nothing could in any way compare with the basket of pieces of French prints with which Isabel had been "setting a Job's Patience." No modern cottons possess the faint delicacy of color and fabric of these old-time French calicoes. We used to delight in spreading the pieces out upon the floor, and choosing, in discreet whispers, what patterns we would like for gowns.

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Piles of yellow old newspapers filled the closet's upper shelves, and a box of thin gauze ribbons and a few pairs of silk gloves, long and limp, completed the list of Isabel's relics. It would be hard to describe the singular charm which clung about these simple keepsakes, though probably, in great part, it was that the joy was a forbidden one. Be that as it may, there was a remarkable attraction exercised upon us by the silent chamber, the ray of sunlight which fell through the heart-shaped hole in the shutter, the narrow brown cupboard, and the precious possessions of poor gray-eyed Isabel, who to us could never be old.

When, as children, we had been especially good, we were sometimes rewarded by being sent upon a visit to a certain delightful maiden lady whom we called "Miss Mary-Ellen." It was really Miss Mary-Ellen whom we went to see, but we always hoped that her sister, Miss Eliza-Ann, would be at home, for Miss Eliza-Ann was

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very strange and did surprising things. She was the elder of the two sisters, and might in these days have been called strong-minded, though the word then was "eccentric." She was a tall, long-armed woman, with a Roman nose, piercing black eyes, and a wild-looking brown wig which was always awry. This wig, by the way, possessed an awful fascination for us children, partly because it was a wig, and partly because Miss Eliza-Ann had a startling habit of suddenly plucking it from her head with a vindictive clutch, and casting it upon the floor, when she was absorbed in study, annoyed by the heat, or excited by discussion. One never knew at what moment she might do this, and therefore we always watched her with hopeful interest. She held great possibilities of amusement. She became in time, for us, a sort of majestic Punch and Judy. Her head was as smooth and ivory-tinted as the ostrich egg which adorned the mantel, and when she doffed her wig her whole ap-

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pearance underwent the most extraordinary change. This habit was terribly annoying to Miss Mary-Ellen, herself the most dainty and decorous of maiden ladies. I can see yet the horrified way in which she would lift her hands, crying, —

"Oh, Eliza-Ann, Eliza-Ann, how can you do so?"

"Because, Mary-Ellen," Miss Eliza-Ann would respond, in her slightly bass voice, "I am uncomfortable. My brain is too warm to think."

"Then at least put on a handkerchief," her sister would plead. "It really does n't seem decent; before the children, too!"

To which Miss Eliza-Ann was apt to reply by her favorite exclamation, "Fiddlesticks!"

However, she would eventually hang loosely over her head a red bandanna handkerchief, which certainly gave her a very witch-like and unpleasant look. She was a woman of superior and, for those days, unusual scholarly attainments. Her

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friends sighed and shook their heads a little over "poor Eliza-Ann." It would have been more truly feminine, they felt, had she not been quite so fine a linguist and mathematician. They could not thoroughly approve of her being able to fit youths for Harvard. Her masculine failings were, however, rather softened by the fact that Miss Eliza-Ann was a model of feminine modesty. In spite of the episodes of the wig, she was severely proper in her way, and a highly irreverent nephew has even been known to declare that his aunt always drew circles by a saucer, considering dividers indelicate on account of their limbs. She had what was, in our eyes, a highly objectionable habit of unexpectedly pouncing upon us with mathematical conundrums. She delighted to spring upon us at unguarded moments, and ask triumphantly, —

"How much are twelve and nine? and thirteen? and twenty-one? and seven?"

And this abominable practice she would

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sometimes pursue for an entire afternoon, waiting until we were happily forgetful and absorbed, and then suddenly attacking us once more with an explosive "And fifteen? and nine?" She called this pastime the "game of mental addition," but it was a sorry game for us. We used to dodge around corners to avoid meeting her on the street, for fear of being confronted with one of these baleful questions; and I recollect encountering Miss Eliza-Ann at a party, when I was quite a grown girl, and having to struggle to persuade myself that she would no longer raise her thin forefinger and say, "And seven? and eighteen?"

As for Miss Mary-Ellen, she was in every way a contrast to her more brilliant sister. She was tall, but, being in delicate health, she was of fragile figure, and was never seen without a demure little shawl about her shoulders. She usually wore a a gown of very dark satin changing from green to black, and a long black silk apron.

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Her ordinary shawl was of fine white cashmere, with a border in black and slaty-blue, and a single large palm-leaf ornamented the corner which hung exactly in the middle of the back. She had other shawls of much gorgeousness, which appeared only upon festive occasions. Miss Mary-Ellen's face was almost as pale as her lovely silver hair, which she wore in little curls each side of her temples. Her cap was white, with tiny bows of lavender ribbon, and her wide worked collar was fastened by a pin containing hair from the heads of her father and mother. I think that she had the very sweetest and most lovable withered old face in the world. I dare say she was no beauty, but we firmly believed her one. She was so delicately and exquisitely fragrant and immaculate that it was like caressing a bunch of garden pinks to put your cheek against hers. Above all, her countenance so beamed with a gentle and innocent kindliness, a sort of beneficent love and charity for all mankind, that we

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children could not choose but adore her. She was not a scholar, like her sister, but she possessed various pretty accomplishments. She directed the house, and, when her health permitted, she always made the "diet bread." It used to be a belief in Salem that it took a lady's hand to make really elegant sponge-cake. Heavier sorts of dainties might be trusted to servants, but only a gentlewoman could fitly be expected to take the responsibility of this most delicate of sweets. So true was this that if a once famous school in Salem did not actually include sponge-cake in its curriculum, at least it is true that no young lady's education was considered finished until she had made a loaf of irreproachable "diet bread." Miss Mary-Ellen's was famous even in Salem. She could also fashion very pretty needle-books, and could paint bright-colored butterflies on Chinese rice-paper. Her delicate health confined her much to the house, and she dearly loved to have children visit her, if they

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were good. She could not bear boisterous conduct, and quarrels and bickerings caused her deep distress. It should be said, however, that we seldom displayed any but our best behavior to gentle Miss Mary-Ellen, and she, on her part, used to exert herself for our enjoyment. We were allowed to play with the curious ivory chessmen which her great-uncle Joseph had brought from Calcutta; she let us look over her piece-bags, and choose one bit of silk or satin for ourselves; and last, and best of all, she showed us her sitting-room cupboard.

The sitting-room was above-stairs, as Miss Mary-Ellen was often too feeble to go down for many weeks together. Here was Miss Eliza-Ann's severe study-table, with its globe and books; and here was her sister's little work-stand, whose deep green-baize drawer held her crewel work and fine sewing; and here, in a cupboard in the white wainscoting, were stored away many curious and delightful objects.

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Miss Mary-Ellen disliked to have her belongings handled, and during the inspection we were seated opposite our hostess, and cautioned to keep our hands clasped. This air of mild ceremony only added to the delight of "seeing Miss Mary-Ellen's things." It was in this cupboard, to begin with, that she kept her shawls. There was one of creamy China *crêpe*, heavy with silken embroidery; another was of scarlet camel's hair, of such fabulous fineness that it might well have been one of those fairy-tale fabrics which were so easily tucked away in a nutshell. In our eyes, however, the most beautiful were a pair of lovely shoulder shawls from Canton, which dwelt in scented seclusion in a sandal-wood box. They were always called "the pina shawls," but their softness was unlike the wiry texture of any pina cloth. One was white, with the clear and dazzling whiteness of spun glass, the groundwork as sheer as a frost web, and the pattern of silvery lilies gleaming with a silky sheen. The com-

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panion shawl was of a charming shade of rose-pink, and this was also shot through with a design of silken flowers. These shawls, our friend told us, she wore with her black satin gown when she gave a "tea-company;" and she added cannily, while putting them to bed in their folds of soft Chinese paper, that she always wore them by turns, so that one should last just as long as the other.

On the second shelf of the cupboard was a small tea-chest, which was apparently full of certain strange beads. Our hostess could not remember whether her great-uncle had said that they had been brought from Canton or Calcutta, but she knew that they came from somewhere in the magical East. Each bead was of the size of a large pea, and was grooved longitudinally. They were made of a fine clay, and were dull blue in color, with an odd glistening effect, as if silver dust might have been mixed with the clay. They were perfumed, and when they became

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warm in the hand or on the neck gave forth a musky sweetness, faint and enchanting. Miss Mary-Ellen gave us each a string of these beads, and I never happen upon them to this day without being touched by a sense of mystery. They suggest strange Hindoo rites, Nautch dances, and women with dusky throats; they never have lost the suggestive charm of that Orient from whence they came.

Among the most pleasing of Miss Mary-Ellen's relics were her fans, of which she possessed a variety. There was one of carved sandal-wood inlaid with pearl and silver, and one of ivory, as fragile as yellow lace; but our delight was an old French fan of light blue silk, whereon a little marquis in silver and pink offered a rose to a dainty marquise in puffs and patches, while, just beyond, three maids, with arms entwined, forever danced a minuet measure, and about all were pale garlands of faded roses and little naked Loves. We loved the pretty marquise and the dancing trio,

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and much preferred this fan even to the Chinese one of white feathers, oddly decorated with little leaves and blossoms in tinsel and gay-colored embossed paper.

And, speaking of feathers, I am reminded of one other drawback, beside the game of mental addition, to the complete enjoyment of our visits to this pleasant house. This drawback was Miss Mary-Ellen's parrot, than which a more thoroughly vicious and disreputable old bird was never seen. As far as I know, he had absolutely no claim to respect or even toleration, except the fact that his mistress loved him. He was ragged and battered in appearance, and his colors, like his morals, were low in tone. He had always about him an air of having been out all night, and, so far from repenting, of reveling in a sense of his own evil ways. He had a wicked eye, and an unpleasant habit of roosting upon the chair-rails and unexpectedly pecking at the legs of us children. His disposition was morose and vengeful

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He loved nobody. He only endured his mistress for the sake of the loaf-sugar she gave him. Between him and Miss Eliza-Ann a deadly dislike existed. As a general thing, he sulked and glowered on the back of a small sofa in the corner. Here I suppose him to have spent his time in reviewing dark episodes in his past life, possibly with some degree of sullen satisfaction. Occasionally he varied this occupation by making a sortie to attack Miss Eliza-Ann's ankles, for which he entertained the greatest aversion. I never knew anything to afford the least amusement to Polly except Miss Eliza-Ann's clutching off her wig; and even in this case I think it was not so much mirth at a ludicrous action as it was diabolic glee at the dreadful guy the poor lady looked, and fiendish enjoyment of her sister's distress. It is certain, however, that it did cause him pleasure, for he would burst into peals of rasping, metallic laughter, swaying insanely on his perch, drawing long

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breaths, and apparently becoming quite exhausted with his mirth. If Miss Eliza-Ann made an attempt to touch him, he would hastily sidle away out of reach, and resume his hoarse, derisive laughter in safety. Our gentle friend was made very unhappy by these exhibitions, which usually ended by Miss Eliza-Ann's assuming the red bandanna, and seating herself at her writing with an injured air, while Polly clucked and glowered from his corner, and Miss Mary-Ellen hastily brought forth some new curiosity to attract our wandering attention.

One thing of which we never tired was a pair of Chinese picture-books, with paintings on rice paper in clear and brilliant colors. There was, of course, no attempt at perspective, and we were much entertained by the little mandarins walking calmly about in the sky, quite over the heads of the jugglers with their yellow balls and the women under flat-topped umbrellas. A pair of carved ivory chop-

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sticks also appeared during the display of Chinese curiosities, and Miss Eliza-Ann, from her corner, threw in a few darkly learned remarks concerning Confucius, to which we listened with respect and vacuity. Miss Eliza-Ann was always ready enough to give us useful information, and she was generally called upon to tell us about a curious Japanese bonze in painted clay, with naked chest and stomach. It had an ugly, wrinkled face, and was squatted on its feet. Miss Eliza-Ann explained all about it in very long words, but we only gathered that the bonze was a holy man or priest, and we secretly thought it a pity that while his robes were otherwise so voluminous, so much of his person should be exposed to the inclemency of the weather.

A department more modern, but not less attractive, of Miss Mary-Ellen's cupboard was the shelf of knick-knacks which kind friends had given her, and which she hoarded in little boxes and baskets with almost childish pleasure. Many of these

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things were oddly trivial as gifts to a grown woman, but the truth was that many of Miss Mary-Ellen's friends had evidently never realized her growing up; at least, they still took a simple delight in bringing to her tiny fancy boxes, miniature fans, baskets of pink sugar, and microscopic books, all of which were received as they were given, and preserved with great care.

On rare, memorable days our hostess would gladden us by bestowing upon us some of these desirable objects.

"Let me see," she would muse, regarding fondly a tiny bird-cage of gilded wire, or a barley baby tucked snugly into a sugary cradle. "I have had this five years, and it has given me much pleasure. I think I can spare it now to give pleasure to somebody else. You may have it, my dear, and I hope you will keep it carefully."

The only two of these presents which lasted us for any length of time were a

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little bonnet of yellow sugar, decorated with a wreath of miniature roses, and a small book. The bonnet was my sister's, and was kept for some years in a box of cotton, until one hapless day we found it broken, by the cold we always supposed. Its owner shed bitter tears over the loss, while her more practical sister suggested that, since it was broken, we might as well see how it tasted. This we proceeded to do, and the result was pasty and disappointing in the extreme. My book was a small black volume, entitled Frank and Flora, being the history of a pair of children of such an aggressive and rampant state of morality that but for the fact that it told what they had to eat and drink upon every occasion it would have been utterly unendurable.

We always loved Miss Mary-Ellen's gifts, however, for they took a grace from the gentle giver, and a charm beyond belief from the delightful cupboard which once had been their home.

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Dear Miss Mary-Ellen and her sister have long since gone — a loving but incongruous pair — to a better world. I am quite certain that the same sort of after-life could never satisfy them both. The quaint old house yet stands, but it is occupied by strangers. They may be, and doubtless are, the most delightful of people, and yet it seems to me all wrong that they should live in that house. The world is out of joint with all these changes. I would not peep into the old mansion, had I the chance, for I like to fancy everything still as it used to be: yet I cannot help sometimes wondering who owns the parrot's corner now; what furniture has deposed Miss Eliza-Ann's table, with its books and globe; above all, what these new folk keep in Miss Mary-Ellen's cupboard.

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MY COUSIN THE CAPTAIN.

THERE lived in Salem twenty years ago — and in fact the remnant lingers still — a race of men who believed in nothing else in all the world so much as they believed in the supremacy of their town as the great maritime centre of America; I do not know that they would not have said of the world.

These were the old sea-captains and sailing-masters, — men who had known Salem in her highest and proudest days of mercantile prosperity: when her wharves were bustling scenes of unlading and of shipping cargoes; when the harbor was the gathering place of quaintly rigged ketches and great East Indiamen laboring in under clouds of canvas; when Derby Street was all alive with captains with their sea-legs still on, and the tall warehouses were

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crammed to the eaves with spicy wares from China and the Philippines; when the merchants were bustling up and down Water Street, hugging themselves with gratulation over happy voyages and prosperous ventures; when Kit's dance-house was filled to overflowing with thirsty sailors, intent upon spending their pay quickly that it might not burn their pockets; when, in point of fact, old Salem was old Salem, in the halcyon days before the great tide of the East India trade had ebbed away, leaving Derby Street stranded, its brown wharves given over to rats and the slow lap of water among the dull green piles, the toppling warehouses transformed into Irish tenements, and the harbor sadly empty, save for occasional slow barges, black and foul, laden with coal for Beverly or hides for Lynn.

The change time has wrought is melancholy, even to the unconcerned outsider, but to the old captains it is like the destruction of Babylon or the fall of Paradise.

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That the writer possesses, although of course in a humble degree, some of the genuine sea-lover's regret for the loss of the old mercantile glory of Salem is due to the acquaintance in childhood of one of the most delightful specimens of the ancient sailing-masters who ever trod deck under foot, or brought rich cargoes into Salem harbor.

This was Captain William Rockwell, who by virtue of a distant connection with my family always went by the name of Cousin William. He was a man over seventy years of age, but the salt of the sea he had so long traversed had preserved in him a sort of immortal youth, and he was still hale and comely. His face was ruddy, and his hair, which was of silvery whiteness and thick and vigorous in growth, was brushed back without parting, and, when its length permitted, bound with a black ribbon, to keep it out of the way. The question of length of hair was always a disputed one between Cousin William

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and his sister Susan. The Captain contended that long hair was bettyish and in the way, while Cousin Susan maintained that cropped hair was foppish and unbecoming to the dignity of a man of the Captain's years. As Cousin Susan performed the office of hair-cutter, she had rather an unfair advantage of her brother, and it is worthy of remark that his hair was generally long enough to be bound by its ribbon. His eyebrows, in striking contrast to his rubicund face and snowy hair, were as black as if newly penciled in crayon, while his eyes, also black, would have stricken awe to our childish souls but for the humorous spark which dwelt within and, in conjunction with a benevolent forehead and those lines of by-gone laughter which inclose the mouth in a merry parenthesis, lent to his face an expression of good will toward all and of resolute content with everything about him.

In his active days, Captain Rockwell had made many voyages in the interest of Sa-

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lem merchants, beginning as a boy of fifteen, and leaving the seas only when his hereditary enemy, the rheumatic gout, overcame him and unfitted him for further active labor. His own cruises had been chiefly to India and China, and his time was that following the death of the famous Elias Haskett Derby, — the time when William Gray and Joseph Peabody were sending their great ships to Cathay and the India Ocean, and later when Captain John Bertram was making those splendid voyages whose record reads like a fairy tale. Cousin William had, however, not only a thorough understanding of the enterprises and the state of commerce in his own time, but he had made a study of Salem's mercantile and marine history back to its opening chapter. He could, I believe, have given a clear and correct account of the voyages of Philip English and Richard Derby. He knew the tonnage of the prominent vessels, the name of the owners and sailing-masters, the car-

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goes and the profits. To all this statistical knowledge he added a fund of lore of a more romantic if less reliable sort, which made him the most entertaining of companions to us children. It was always something of a problem to us just how much of the marvelous adventure on high seas which Cousin William related he really believed himself; and this we never could discover to the day of his death. The old gentleman was so decidedly testy if questioned as to the veracity of any of his extraordinary tales, that we very early learned not to ask, "Is it really true?"

When free from his rheumatism he was of a social and friendly disposition, and fond of receiving visits from us children. He instructed us in the art of making sailor knots, and it was one of his pet vexations that packages from the shops were tied up in such meaningless and slovenly ways. I can still tie as he taught me "a bowline on a bight," but I never do it without being transported to Cousin Susan's

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tidy back parlor, and seeing once more the bit of cord on Cousin William's knee and the blue anchor on the inside of his hirsute wrist, an adornment which was made in his cabin-boy days, and of which he was ever afterward somewhat ashamed.

If, as I have said, Cousin William was in good health, he always welcomed our arrival most kindly; but if we opened the door to see him seated with his bandaged legs supported upon a chair, his ruddy face contracted to an awful scowl, and to hear him say, "Look out for the Old Man from Zanzibar; he eats youngsters!" then indeed we softly but precipitately closed the door and withdrew in haste, for we knew that the Captain's tormentor had him in his grasp, and that he wished to be left in peace to battle with his pain. Who this Old Man from Zanzibar was we never satisfactorily knew, but the very vagueness of our information concerning him clothed him with added terrors, and he was one of the most successful of the bogies of my childhood.

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Aside from his attacks of gout, the Captain lived a life of easy and methodical monotony. He rose early, breakfasted at seven, walked down to the Athenæum and back, read his Boston paper, ate his dinner at twelve, then took a short nap upon the back parlor sofa, first carefully protecting its foot by spreading across it a thin brown shawl kept for that purpose. After his nap he repaired to Cousin Susan's sitting-room up-stairs, where he read aloud to her for one hour, and then he went down to Broad Street to make a call upon a married niece and her children. Tea was drank decorously at half-past five o'clock, and after tea Cousin William's pet crony, Captain Eliphalet Nicholson, came in to spend the evening.

Captain Nicholson offered in every respect a striking contrast to his host. He was a thin, dry, weazened man, as lively in his movements as a cricket. He wore a rusty brown wig, and always told us children that his own hair was blown out by

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the roots in a terrible gale at the Cape of Good Hope. Although, as this would prove, occasionally jocose, his disposition was irascible and his temper quite uncertain; wherefore we children, little sycophants that we were, tried to conceal the fact that we were really shy of him by laughing with obsequious eagerness whenever he made a jest. He had a tart tongue and a hot and spicy manner in conversation; and I think it not altogether unlikely that the many vast cargoes of pepper which he had brought from Sumatra had had their effect upon his disposition.

It was rather difficult to account for the firm friendship which these two old captains had for each other, since they held the same opinion upon scarcely any points. They were forever arguing upon this or that, and never agreeing; and as both were somewhat stubborn old gentlemen, it was no uncommon occurrence for the choleric Captain Nicholson to arise in his wrath and betake himself out of the house,

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vowing never to enter it again; a proceeding which never in the least disturbed the equanimity of Cousin William. He knew what to expect, and he was never disappointed, for the next evening would see Captain Nicholson in his usual seat beside the round table of polished mahogany, as lively, as argumentative, and as peppery as ever.

At eight o'clock exactly, a maid-servant brought in a tray set with tumblers, a lemon, a silver nutmeg-grater, a silver knife and a decanter of rum. Captain Nicholson then solemnly spread his blue and white handkerchief over his knees and carefully divided the lemon into halves. Cousin William with equal care measured a portion of sugar into the tumbler, and on the sugar grated a shower of nutmeg. Each then measured out his own allowance of rum, and here the paths divided; for Cousin William contended that the lemon could not be properly blended unless it were mixed in before the addition of the

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hot water, while his friend stoutly held that the lemon was ruined in flavor by having hot water poured on top of it. Time had, however, somewhat softened this disagreement, so that each captain went his own way; and there was a suspension of hostilities while the two old gentlemen sat seriously sipping their hot rum and water on either side of the round table.

There was to us children an inexhaustible fascination in the conversation of these two mariners, who had come after years of peril and gallant adventure on the seas to the snug harborage of Cousin Susan's back parlor. Even when they were not actually telling stories to us, it was still one of the treats of our childhood to be allowed to sit in some obscure corner, unheeded and unseen, and listen silently. There was about their conversation all the "mystery and magic of the sea," the flavor of adventure and danger; there was excitement in the mention, not then so commonplace as

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now, of strange lands and far-away ports; there was poetry in the names of the vessels, — the ship Lotus, the Black Warrior, the brig Persia, the Light Horse, the Three Friends, and the great Grand Turk. There was, too, a charm about those cargoes. They were no commonplace bales of merchandise, but were suggestive in their very names of the sweet, strange odors of that East from which they came. There was food for the imagination in the mention of those ship-loads of gum copal from Madagascar and Zanzibar; of hemp, iron and duck from Russia; of Bombay cotton, of ginger, pepper, coffee and sugar-candy from India; of teas, silks and nankeens from China; salt from Cadiz, and fruits from the ports of the Mediterranean.

We children used to listen as to a fairy tale to stories of the unlading of those great Indiamen whose cargoes actually scented the air with spicy fragrance; but I think that pepper was the favorite cargo of Captain Nicholson, and he used to tell

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with much delight of the secret voyages to Sumatra.

"Pepper," he would say, "grew wild at Sumatra, and nobody knew it till Captain Jonathan Carnes was man enough to find it out. Why, sir, I dare say if it had n't been for" —

[Here the MS. ends abruptly. The notes made for its continuance are scanty. There is jotted down a reference to the rescue by Captain Ingersoll, on a return voyage from the West Indies with a cargo of rum, of the master and mate of the English schooner Amity, whose crew had mutinied and set these officers adrift in a boat. After his arrival in Salem the English captain was sitting one day with Mr. Elias Haskett Derby in the counting-room of the latter, and while using the spy-glass saw his own vessel in the offing. Mr. Derby at once manned one of his brigs, armed it with a couple of cannon, and, taking with him the Englishman, quickly and neatly recaptured the Amity.

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There is also noted the pathetic story of an old sea-captain whose only daughter died in early womanhood, and who on every anniversary of her birth-night set in the window of her deserted chamber a lighted lamp to burn through all the dark hours as a token of his undying love and remembrance.

These scattered memoranda follow: —

"Dangers of coral reefs and murderous Malays.

"The old fellow who recommended his house because the chips would not rattle in the partitions.

"The dinner of the E. I. Marine Co. — Carrying the President through the streets in a palanquin."

There is also a note of an intention of commenting upon the fact that the first slaves which came to New England were brought in the Salem ship Desire; of speaking of the enormous importation of New England rum and Virginian tobacco into the west coast regions of Africa by Salem merchants; and there is a reference to the quaint conceit of Benjamin Pickman, who, in recognition of the

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fact that his fortune had been made by the exportation of codfish to the West Indies, and with a noble disregard of the obvious jests likely to be made at the expense of any aristocratic pretensions on the part of his family, set a carved and gilded effigy of that fish on the side of each stair in the front hall of his mansion on Essex Street.

It is hardly to be doubted that had we been given more of the conversation of Cousin William and his friend Captain Nicholson we should have heard discourse of the doings of the Salem privateers both in the Revolution and in the War of 1812. One so familiar with Salem's glorious record as Captain Rockwell could not fail of the ability to tell with zest and completeness the tale of the Gen. Pickering, Captain Haraden, master, which had that gallant fashion of sailing up to craft beside which she "looked like a long-boat by the side of a ship," and commanding them to surrender to an American frigate with so absolute an air that they generally did it on the spot. He would have made much of that famous battle between the Gen. Pickering and the

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British cutter Achilles, so near the Spanish coast that a hundred thousand spectators viewed the conflict from the shore with as much relish as if it had been a bull-fight. He would have reveled, too, in the deeds of the great Grand Turk in 1815, and would have had his joke over that brig's ungallant wresting from the Active Jane of her "seven bags of specie, containing 14,000 mill rees," and still more cruel scuttling her afterward. He would have repeated tales of suffering told him by sailors held in slavery by the fierce Algerines, while of pirates and strange escapes and monsters of the deep or of wild lands his knowledge must have been inexhaustible. He must have known the tonnage and the rig of all the proud craft set afloat by Retire Becket and Enos Briggs, and he was probably not without a decided personal opinion of all the masters who had sailed therein.

How much or how little of this it was Eleanor Putnam's intention to set down it is impossible now to determine. What was written is little more than an introduction to what was intended; but to this and to all death made an end.]

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